

★ CURRENT MEMBERS ★



Image courtesy of the Member

Lucille Roybal-Allard

1941–

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

DEMOCRAT FROM CALIFORNIA

1993–

FOLLOWING HER FAMILY'S TRADITION OF PUBLIC SERVICE, Lucille Roybal-Allard pioneered new political ground in 1992, becoming the first Mexican-American woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress. Running in a new congressional district, Roybal-Allard also was one of a handful of daughters to follow a father to Congress. Like her father, Edward Roybal, she serves on the Appropriations Committee and is a former chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (the first Latina to hold both positions).

Born in Los Angeles, California, on June 12, 1941, Lucille Roybal is one of three children of Lucille Beserra and the late Edward Roybal. Lucille Roybal graduated from California State University in Los Angeles in 1965 with a B.A. in speech therapy. She worked in alcohol and drug treatment programs in Los Angeles as a public relations and fund-raising executive for the United Way and as the executive director of a national trade association for Hispanic certified public accountants in Washington, D.C. Lucille Roybal married Edward T. Allard III in 1981. They have four children: Ricardo, Lisa, Angela, and Guy Mark; and six grandchildren.

Edward Roybal served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 30 years—chairing the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) and rising to the rank of chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee of the Treasury-Postal Service-General Government. In 1987, Roybal-Allard followed her father into public office, winning a special election to fill a vacancy in the California state assembly, where she served until 1992. In the state legislature, Roybal-Allard was an advocate of women's rights and passed key legislation to protect victims of rape and domestic violence. She also was a proponent of environmental justice. She successfully led a campaign against the building of a commercial hazardous waste incinerator in her urban district. The battle led her to author several environmental bills that became law, including a measure requiring environmental impact reports. Roybal-Allard also worked on advancing Hispanic entrepreneurship and strived to enable the local communities to have economic and political control.¹

Following the 1990 Census, a new congressional district was created, encompassing most of her assembly district. In 1992, Lucille Roybal-Allard ran for Congress in the new district, capitalizing both on family name recognition and on the legislative record she created in the state assembly. She easily won the primary, with 73 percent of the vote. In the general election, she defeated Republican Robert Guzman with 63 percent of the vote. Since her first campaign, Congresswoman Roybal-Allard has been re-elected to six additional Congresses with margins higher than 70 percent.²

When Roybal-Allard was sworn into the House in January 1993, she was assigned to two committees: Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs (later renamed Banking and Financial Services); and Small Business. Starting in the 104th Congress (1995–1997), she took a post on the Budget Committee in exchange for her seat on the Small Business panel. In the 105th and 106th Congresses (1997–2001), Roybal-Allard served on the House Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns With the People's Republic of China. Roybal-Allard's reputation as a respected consensus builder won her the chairmanship of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation in 1997 and 1998. In assuming this position, she became the first woman to serve at the delegation's helm and the first Member to achieve this role through election rather than seniority.

Representing a district with one of the largest Hispanic populations in the nation (77.2 percent), Roybal-Allard followed in her father's footsteps in 1999 and 2000 when she became chair of the CHC. Under her leadership, the CHC played a major role in passing immigration reforms, increasing funding for Hispanic Serving Institutions and the partial restoration of food stamps, Social Security benefits, and Medicaid for legal immigrants.

Roybal-Allard relinquished all her prior committee assignments in 1999 for a seat on the prestigious Appropriations Committee, where she still sits. Roybal-Allard serves on two influential Appropriations subcommittees—Homeland Security; and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. From these panels, she oversees funding of the Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship and Immigration Services, Customs Service, Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Education. In the 108th Congress (2003–2005), Roybal-Allard also drew an assignment on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

In Congress, Roybal-Allard concentrates on social and domestic legislation. Her legislative priorities include homeland security, reducing underage drinking, promoting maternal and child health, and making college affordable and accessible to all students, including immigrant youth. She also works to meet the needs of her constituents by bringing millions in federal dollars to her district for key priorities such as transportation, economic development, infrastructure, housing, public safety, health care, and education.

FOR FURTHER READING

Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, "Lucille Roybal-Allard," <http://bioguide.congress.gov>

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

California State Archives
(Sacramento, CA). *Papers*: 1987–1990, approximately five cubic feet. Office files of Lucille Roybal-Allard from her tenure in the California state assembly. The files contain bill information, correspondence, invitations, and schedules.

NOTES

1 *Congressional Directory*, 108th Cong. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2003); *Politics in America*, 2004 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2003): 132–133; "Lucille Roybal-Allard," Associated Press Candidate Biographies, 2004.

2 "Election Statistics, 1920 to Present," <http://clerk.house.gov/members/electionInfo/elections.html>.